

Message Text

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17

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02

/061 W

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R 201615Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2106
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
USMISSION USBERLIN UNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BERLIN 5286

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, PINS, PROP, GE
SUBJECT: GDR MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE 1976 WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES

1. GDR MEDIA PLAYED THE EXPECTED THEMES FOR THE 1976 WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES AT INNSBRUCK. PRIMARY EMPHASIS WAS, OF COURSE, GIVEN TO THE EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE OF THE GDR TEAM WITH ITS SEVEN GOLD, FIVE SILVER AND SEVEN BRONZE MEDALS. HOURS OF TV PROGRAMMING AND EXTENSIVE PRESS COVERAGE BLANKETED THIS SPORTS-CONSCIOUS COUNTRY. EVERY GOLD MEDAL WON BY THE GDR RECEIVED FULL TV FILMING WITH THE ULTIMATE SCENE IN EACH CASE BEING THE RAISING OF THE GDR FLAG TO THE ACCOMPANYMENT OF THE EAST GERMAN NATIONAL ANTHEM. NONE OF THIS VARIED MUCH FROM OTHER NATIONAL COVERAGES.

2. SPECIAL THEMES WERE THE GLORIFICATION OF SOVIET AND GDR VICTORIES AND "SOCIALIST ATHLETICS AND SPORTS TRAINING PROGRAMS" IN GENERAL AND THE DENIGRATION OF THE VICTORIES OF OTHER (READ NON-SOCIALIST) NATIONAL TEAMS, PARTICULARLY THE FRG. THUS, ROSIE MITTERMAIER OF THE FRG, APPARENTLY ONE OF THE MOST PERSONALLY POPULAR OF THE

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OLYMPIC STARS AND WINNER OF TWO GOLD MEDALS, WAS DESCRIBED

BY GDR TV COMMENTATORS AS BEING "UNUSUALLY ADVANTAGED"
BECAUSE HER FATHER REPORTEDLY RUNS A SKIING SCHOOL AND THE
SNOW CONDITIONS GVE HER PARTICULAR (READ UNFAIR)
HELP.

3. IN SOME INSTANCES, REPORTING ON AMERICAN WINNERS AT
THE OLYMPICS WAS CHARACTERIZED BY A RELUCTANCE TO ACCEPT
THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS WITH GOOD GRACE. THIS WAS THE CASE
WITH PETER MUELLER WHO WON THE 1000 METER SPEED SKATING
EVENT. NEUES DEUTSCHLAND REPORTED THAT MUELLER HAD BEEN
"PROGRAMMED" TO WIN THIS EVENT BY INTENSIVE TRAINING
SPONSORED BY AN AMERICAN FIRM AND BY A DETERMINATION THAT
MUELLER HAD THE CORRECT MUSCLE STRUCTURE FOR CONTESTING
COMPETITIONS INVOLVING SPEED. BURIED IN THE ARTICLE IS THE
STATEMENT THAT THE FOREGOING INFORMATION SHOULD NOT
DETRACT FROM MUELLER'S PERFORMANCE.
IN GENERAL, MEDIA HANDLING OF OTHER AMERICAN GOLD MEDALISTS
WAS RESTRAINED AND POLITE.

4. OUTRAGE AND ANGER AGAINST A MYSTERIOUS "PLOT"
CHARACTERIZED GDR MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE CHARGES APPARENTLY
CIRCULATED IN ANONYMOUS LETTERS THAT THE GDR BOBSLEDDERS
WERE CHEATING BY HEATING THE RUNNERS OF THEIR SLEDS JUST
PRIOR TO BEGINNING THEIR RUNS FOR THE RECORD.

5. CONSPICUOUS FOR ITS ABSENCE IN THE GDR MEDIA WAS
ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THE DEFLECTION OF CLAUS TUCHSCHERER,
A GDR SKIER WHO PLACED FIFTH IN THE NORDIC COMBINATION FOR MEN.
FRG TV REPORTED THAT TUCHSCHERER REQUESTED AND
OBTAINED AN FRG PASSPORT FROM THE FRG CONSULATE GENERAL
IN GRAZ.

6. GDR MEDIA COVERED WITH SOME SATISFACTION THE
CANCELLATION OF ACCREDITATION OF RFE CORRESPONDENTS COVERING
INNSBRUCK EARLY IN THE GAMES. IN THESE STORIES, AS IN
OTHERS, RFE IS CHARACTERIZED AS A COLD-WAR, ANTI-DETENTE
INSTRUMENTALITY SERVING IMPERIALIST AIMS.

7. COMMENT: THE GDR GAVE VERY HEAVY PLAY TO
INNSBRUCK WITH AN ORTHODOX POLITICAL SLANT. IN THIS WAY,
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TOO, SPORTS SERVE THE PURPOSES OF THE REGIME. GROVE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, OLYMPIC GAMES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 FEB 1976
Decapton Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BERLIN05286
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760065-0591
From: BERLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760232/aaaabbbz.tel
Line Count: 108
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 MAR 2004 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <02 JUL 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GDR MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE 1976 WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, PINS, PROP, GC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006